

1 Interview Summaries

1.1 Department of Education

Interview Type	Telephone, State Agency
Interview Location	
Interview Date	November 28, 2001
Summary Date	November 30, 2001
Interviewer	CDM / Michelle Thaler (thalerma@cdm.com)
Interviewed:	James Watkins, Management Information Systems Team Leader (james.e.watkins@state.me.us) 207-624-6790 Scott Brown, School Construction Specialist, (scott.brown@state.me.us) 207-624-6842 Jay Readinger, School Construction Specialist, (jay.readinger@state.me.us) Harvey Boatman, School Construction/Transportation Specialist (harvey.boatman@state.me.us)
Staff Size (approx)	No full time GIS staff
Budget (approx)	none
URL:	http://www.state.me.us/education/

1.1.1 Overview

The Department of Education oversees the 285 school units in the State of Maine. These units consist either of a single town or a group of towns. Each unit has its own staff responsible for enrollment projections and school planning, although each unit does not necessarily have a school facility. The state department of education staff work with and oversee the unit staff. DOE staff responsibilities range from database maintenance to school planning, site location review for new schools, and transportation planning. All of these activities would be supported and enhanced by the use of GIS technology.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

Currently the DOE does not have GIS software. DOE staff sometimes call on OGIS to print maps. Maps usually include the location of school buildings as well as community maps showing roads and school locations.

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

- PCs are on WAN
- Large plotter is located in another department in the same building
- Delorme maps are used in presentations

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

DOE does not create or maintain any spatial data. All data is created and stored by OGIS.

Currently unavailable but desired data sets include:

DOE staff would like to perform analysis using the following data sets:

- E911 roads
- Zoning
- Student locations (likely geocoded to E911 roads)
- School unit locations/boundaries
- Bus routes

1.1.2.3.2 Attribute Data

Files are stored in a combination of Microsoft Access, Oracle and COBOL files. This data is being consolidated to either Oracle or Access.

Units are currently examining bus routing software.

DOE obtains data from the Bureau of Revenue services

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements**Planned future GIS activity and applications:**

The DOE would like to generate maps of all school unit locations. Data could be available to Unit staff via a GIS web application.

The DOE would like to use GIS to help with school locations. There is currently a shift of student population away from northern and eastern Maine and into southern Maine. Thus, some schools in areas with declining population may have to be closed while schools in areas of increasing population may be approaching or at capacity. GIS could be used to determine which schools to close and where new schools should be constructed.

Many school units are exploring the use of bus routing software. Some school units have formed alliances and jointly purchased software. Waterville and Oakland purchased Versatrans software and Oakland will be doing the bus routing for both units. This software uses the E911 roads data layer.

The state is currently implementing a capital asset management program. VFA software is being used. The database is Oracle and sits on a server at VFA, a company located in Boston, MA. Users at DOE can produce reports and have administrative privileges to the database. Users, including school units, access the database via a web interface. This database, not yet populated, will contain school location data as well as age, condition, square footage and other facility information. An Access database is being developed to store operations and maintenance information for school facilities.

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

- Staff at DOE are unsure of OGIS role; staff said that whenever they asked for maps they got exactly what they needed, but they aren't sure what they can ask for.

- Staff at DOE were not aware of the OGIS web site or the data available on the web for download.
- DOE staff would like to be able to produce their own maps; they would need some GIS software in order to do this; and they would need training.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

DOE staff recognize the need for and benefit of GIS. Now is a particularly important time to examine ways to use GIS since the DOE is seeing relocations to southern Maine with an increase in school population and a decrease in population in northern and eastern parts of the state. There are a number of databases currently being developed, such as the VFA asset management database, which could be use in GIS analysis.

GIS would be most beneficial for facility location planning and school transportation issues. Other states have reported increased efficiencies in automated school bus routing yielding seven-figure annual cost savings.